

A BRIEF HISTORY ON HEBREW ISRAELISM

by Vocab Malone (10/08/21)

Adherents of Hebrew Israelism believe there's an inevitable awakening happening. This awakening grows as individuals come to the knowledge about their "true heritage" as God's chosen people. Author Ella Hughley writes: *"The prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 37 and many others began their modern-day fulfillment in 1896" ... "when a prophet of the Almighty God, William Saunders Crowdy, resurrected and re-established the house of Israel in Lawrence, Kansas."*

Crowdy (1847-1908) was the probably the first to expound this idea (it's possible William Christian taught black Israelism as early as 1888 in Arkansas). Crowdy founded the Church of God and Saints of Christ on November 8, 1896. Here's the account of his vision from the group's website:

One day while felling trees, the hand and the Spirit of the Lord were heavy upon him. ... He heard a voice telling him to run for his life. He became disturbed, and fled into the woods, thinking that he was going to die. ... It was during his sojourn in the wild that the Almighty God revealed to Prophet William S. Crowdy the "Ancient Plan of Salvation" as taught by Moses and the other biblical prophets. ... Those same truths which the former prophets had fostered were heralded again by this Prophet of God: the Sabbath (Saturday), the Passover, the Hebrew Calendar, the Day of Atonement, and above all, the Ten Commandments of the Sinai Revelation. ... As he strove to re-establish this doctrine and gather the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 10:6), he met with much opposition from some of his listeners and from some of the civil authorities. While preaching on the streets, he was arrested 22 times, however, he continued the mission on which he had been sent.

A visit to IUIC's website shows they link themselves to Crowdy's work. Sar-Saraht Ma'asehyahu, affiliated with the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem (Dimona, Israel), comments: "I noticed in the last two years, that they have now been creating charts in which they trace themselves back to Crowdy" ... "Crowdy's group disavows everything that they're about because Crowdy's first followers - as an ex-slave who maintained this tradition – his first followers were actually white. So he's diametrically opposed to everything they stand for".

Other pioneers of early Hebrew Israelism include Warren Roberson, who founded the Temple of The Gospel of The Kingdom in Virginia in 1900. In 1917, Roberson moved the headquarters to Harlem. In 1917, F.S. Cherry established the Church of God in Philadelphia. In 1919, Wentworth Arthur Matthews founded the Commandments Keepers in Harlem. In 1930, Arnold Josiah Ford established the Beth B'nai Abraham congregation (later incorporated into the Commandment Keepers).

A man nicknamed “Abba Bivens” joined the Commandment Keepers under Chief Rabbi Matthews. Bivens eventually rejected the Old Testament only teaching and broke away from the Black Jewish congregation. In 1969, Bivens began the Israelite School of Torah. Shortly after, Bivens was murdered by Muslims in Newark.

Three of his students continued with the new school at 1 West 125th Street in Harlem (ideological descendants are called “1Westers”). They changed the name to Israeli Church of Universal Practical Knowledge and codified a number of innovations: belief in the KJV, the 12 Tribes Chart, and “Lashawan Qadash” Hebrew.

One of the “Seven Heads” of the school, Arayah, predicted Christ would return in 2000 (based off Hosea 6:13). The group, now known as ICUPK, suffered a terrible setback when Christ *did not* return to kill or enslave all “non-Israelites” on January 1st, 2000. There was a crisis of faith in leadership, leading to even more splinter groups.

A low-ranking member named Tazadaqyah (Jermaine Grant) rose to power over Ahrayah. He changed their name (again) to the Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ (ICGJC). Tazadaqyah’s titles were expansive: Apostle and Chief High Priest Tazadaqyah and Holy God Sent Comforter. While visiting Israel, it is said Tazadaqyah had a revelation. Afterwards, he declared himself to be “the Comforter”, i.e., the Holy Spirit in the form of a man. After being sentenced to 18 months in federal prison on tax evasion charges, Grant died from COVID-19 in early 2020 at 44.

To learn more, get Vocab’s book: *Barack Obama vs. the Black Hebrew Israelites: Introduction to the Beliefs and History of 1West Hebrew Israelism*. Available at Amazon, Wal-Mart, Barnes & Noble, and The Book Patch.